

The Next Life
Resurrection Hope
Hope while Suffering
Romans 8:13-25

Introduction

"Character cannot be developed in ease and quiet. Only through experience of trial and suffering can the soul be strengthened, ambition inspired, and success achieved." – Helen Keller

"Our heavenly Father understands our disappointment, suffering, pain, fear, and doubt. He is always there to encourage our hearts and help us understand that He's sufficient for all of our needs." – Charles Stanley

Today we will look at how our hope for the future guides us through our present sufferings. If we understand and trust what God promises us in the next life, we can be hopeful in our current sufferings. A passage in Romans 8 is one of the most significant chapters in the whole Bible on this subject. We'll start from the end of this passage and work back.

Romans 8:24 says, "For we were saved in this hope, but hope that is seen is not hope; for why does one still hope for what he sees? But if we hope for what we do not see, we eagerly wait for *it* with perseverance." (Romans 8:24-25 NKJV)

Paul says eternal hope gives us incredible perseverance in our present situations because we have a confident anticipation of our eternal future.

To acquire this kind of persistent hope, we need the proper foundation, focus, perspective on suffering and credible evidence to support such a hope.

I. The Foundation of Hope Is Adoption Into God's Family

Verses 15-17 tell us how to obtain this hope. Romans 8:15 "For you did not receive the spirit of bondage again to fear, but you received the Spirit of adoption by whom we cry out, "Abba, Father." The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, then heirs—heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with *Him*, that we may also be glorified together." (Romans 8:15-17 NKJV)

The *foundation* for our hope is adoption into God's family. Since sin has separated this world from God, we are born alienated from God. We can't blame Adam and Eve for everything because we deserve God's judgment because of our own rebellion against him. Thankfully, Jesus voluntarily bore the judgment we deserved so that we could receive this adoption that we don't deserve! Jesus was forsaken so that we could be included.

Paul says we must receive this adoption to understand eternal hope. John 1:12 says, "But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name:" (John 1:12 NKJV)

The moment you become a child of God, you become an heir to all of God's blessings. In Roman society, adopted children were not second-rate family members but full legal heirs. God has promised us a full share in Jesus' inheritance.

And this inheritance is the *focus* of our hope.

II. The Focus of Hope Is Resurrection Life In A New Heaven and Earth

Romans 8:16-23 says, "The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, then heirs—heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with *Him*, that we may also be glorified together. For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy *to be compared* with the glory which shall be revealed in us. For the earnest expectation of the creation eagerly waits for the revealing of the sons of God. For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of Him who subjected *it* in hope; because the creation itself also will be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God. For we know that the whole creation groans and labors with birth pangs together until now. Not only *that*, but we also who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, eagerly waiting for the adoption, the redemption of our body." (Romans 8:16-23 NKJV)

Paul calls our inheritance "glorified with Christ" in verse 17 and "God's glory revealed" in verse 18. "Glory" is when the majesty of God is made visible. Our inheritance as adopted children of God is to experience God's glory to the fullest extent possible.

It also includes ruling and reigning over a new world filled with his glory and completely free of sin, sickness, and disease. When Christ returns and restores this world to His perfection, we will inhabit this new world with new bodies that radiate his glory. We receive this inheritance when Jesus returns to establish God's kingdom. Philippians 3:20 says, "For our citizenship is in heaven, from which we also eagerly wait for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, who will transform our lowly body, that it may be conformed to His glorious body, according to the working by which He is able even to subdue all things to Himself." (Philippians 3:20-21 NKJV)

Did you know that God created nature to be a visible expression of his majesty and glory? Ps.19:1 says, "The heavens declare the glory of God, And the firmament shows His handiwork." (Psalms 19:1 NKJV)

Sadly, our world has been marred by sin. Yet even now, nature is filled with lingering touches of glory that still leave us in awe. But nature is broken. Nature has become aggressive in many ways; through natural disasters, insects, animals

carrying diseases causing sickness, and shifts in the earth resulting in injury and even loss of life. But the day is coming when God will redeem his creation, restore nature, heal its brokenness, and give it a beauty and grandeur that surpasses any natural wonder we have ever seen.

Not only did God create nature to manifest His glory, but He also created us for the same purpose. Even now, we are a marvel of complexity, coordination, personality, and intelligence. But humanity, too, is deeply broken, psychologically, intellectually, and physically. But when Christ returns, all of God's children will be wholly rescued, redeemed, and restored. Even the most broken one, who surrenders to Christ's loving care, will radiate with beauty, health, and power to the glory of God.

Isaiah accurately predicted Jesus' first coming in Isaiah 53 and describes our inheritance in Chapter 25. In verse 9, he writes, "And it will be said in that day: "Behold, this *is* our God; We have waited for Him, and He will save us. This *is* the LORD; We have waited for Him; We will be glad and rejoice in His salvation."

(Isaiah 25:9 NKJV)

Isaiah sees in Chapter 60 a host of people coming to God, "Lift up your eyes all around and see: They all gather together, they come to you; Your sons shall come from afar, And your daughters shall be nursed at *your* side. Then you shall see and become radiant, And your heart shall swell with joy; Because the abundance of the sea shall be turned to you, The wealth of the Gentiles shall come to you." (Isaiah 60:4-5 NKJV)

Verse 17 says, "Instead of bronze I will bring gold, Instead of iron I will bring silver, Instead of wood, bronze, And instead of stones, iron. I will also make your officers peace, And your magistrates righteousness. Violence shall no longer be heard in your land, Neither wasting nor destruction within your borders; But you shall call your walls Salvation, And your gates Praise. "The sun shall no longer be your light by day, Nor for brightness shall the moon give light to you; But the LORD will be to you an everlasting light, And your God your glory. Your sun shall no longer go down, Nor shall your moon withdraw itself; For the LORD will be your everlasting light, And the days of your mourning shall be ended. Also, your people *shall all be* righteous; They shall inherit the land forever, The branch of My planting, The work of My hands, That I may be glorified." (Isaiah 60:17-21 NKJV)

Isaiah 61:7; "Instead of your shame *you shall have* double *honor*, And *instead of* confusion they shall rejoice in their portion. Therefore in their land they shall possess double; Everlasting joy shall be theirs." (Isaiah 61:7 NKJV)

Isaiah 65:17, "For behold, I create new heavens and a new earth; And the former shall not be remembered or come to mind. But be glad and rejoice forever in what I create; For behold, I create Jerusalem *as* a rejoicing, And her people a joy. I will rejoice in Jerusalem, And joy in My people; The voice of weeping shall no longer be heard in her, Nor the voice of crying." (Isaiah 65:17-19 NKJV)

This is the focus of our hope. When we accept this glorious truth and focus on it, our eternal view radically changes, and so does our perspective on the sufferings of this life.

III. The Perseverance of Hope Is Like Suffering the Pangs of Childbirth

Unfortunately, like Jesus, we must suffer before we receive our inheritance. Romans 8:16 says, "The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, then heirs—heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with *Him*, that we may also be glorified together. (Romans 8:16-17 NKJV)

But our inheritance profoundly changes our perspective and reaction to our sufferings. Romans 8:21 says, "the creation itself also will be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God. For we know that the whole creation groans and labors with birth pangs together until now. Not only *that*, but we also who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, eagerly waiting for the adoption, the redemption of our body." (Romans 8:21-23 NKJV)

Paul says our sufferings are not an end in themselves. He likens them to the pangs of childbirth and says we groan in expectant labor. On the one hand, there is a groaning. *Stenazo* means a strong expression of grief, pain, outrage, or complaint.

Suffering is, by definition, a painful experience. Whether it's problems with your children, your job, your marriage, your health, discouragement, depression, you name it; suffering is a painful experience. For Christians, our groans are deeper because we know that we were created to live in a world free from sickness, death, evil, and the tragedies of life. How different our present experience is from what we will inherit in the next life.

Sometimes this knowledge can produce deep heart sadness within us because even if you're a Christian, things will go wrong in your life. Accidents harm Christians, they get sick, and they have persons who dislike them and hurt them. And despite our desire to be like Christ, who was perfect and sinless, we still make mistakes and sin. Our longing to be a part of heaven sometimes clashes with the reality of living in a fallen world. The result is that this conflict causes a groaning in our spirit. Our heart feels the pain caused by the brokenness of the world, and it causes our spirit to groan. Jesus reacted this way to Lazarus' death (Jn.11:33-38), even though he knew he would soon raise him from the dead.

The Apostle Paul says we are groaning in expectant labor. We suffer painfully, but our anticipation outweighs our suffering because it will end with the birth of a joyous new world. This pain and suffering is something that the whole of creation feels. But for the Christian, the sufferings of this life are temporary because of the impending miracle of birth.

A far better world is about to be born out of this one. We sorrow for those suffering now! We groan for those dying without hope, and we groan with a longing for deliverance and a new life as if it were childbirth. Some face the pain with a sense of hopeless dread, but faith faces the pain with hopeful anticipation.

The pain is very real, but pain with hope is like that of a mother anticipating the joy of holding her newborn child. We know that this "new birth" will more than compensate us for the worst of this life's sufferings. In verse 18, Paul says, "For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy *to be compared* with the glory which shall be revealed in us." ([Romans 8:18 NKJV](#))

We do not succumb to cynicism or despair of our suffering because we know our sufferings are not futile. Every suffering brings us closer to the birth of this new world, so we wait eagerly (8:25) and pray like the early Christians, "Even so," "Come quickly, Lord Jesus" (Rev.22:20).

How do you respond to suffering? Can you see beyond the suffering to the joy and rejoicing God intends to lavish upon you? Do you spend enough time focusing on the resurrection, hope, new birth, and joy of your eternal life?

The evidence of resurrection hope is the witness of God's Spirit in your life.

IV. The Evidence of Hope Is The Witness of God's Spirit in your life.

How can we know we will receive this inheritance? We know because we have already received what Paul calls the "first fruits of the Spirit." The "first fruits" refers to an Old Testament spring festival that celebrated the beginning of the harvest.

The Israelites were told to bring the first ripened barley sheaves to the Tabernacle and praise God for this tangible evidence of a total harvest soon to come. So "first fruits" is like receiving a "down payment" on your inheritance. You have to wait until later to receive the entire inheritance, but the part you have already received assures you that the rest will be yours.

Paul uses this same term to describe Jesus' resurrection in 1 Corinthians 15:20, "But now Christ is risen from the dead, *and* has become the first fruits of those who have fallen asleep." ([1 Corinthians 15:20 NKJV](#))

We know that God already raised Jesus from the dead, which gives us solid objective evidence that he will raise the rest of his children from the dead when Jesus returns.

Paul also refers to the Spirit as the "down payment" of our inheritance in Eph.1:13 "In Him, you also *trusted*, after you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation; in whom also, having believed, you were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise." ([Ephesians 1:13 NKJV](#))

The witness of God's Spirit within us is the assurance that our bodies and this world will be redeemed when Jesus returns.

What is this experience of God's Spirit? Already the Spirit is transforming our moral lives. In Romans 8:13, Paul says, "For if you live according to the flesh, you will die; but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live." (Romans 8:13 NKJV)

We used to be in bondage to sin, but now Christ has given us freedom from sin. We used to be numb and deceived by sin, but now we are uncomfortable with it. That is the "first fruits" of moral transformation, even though we may have a long way to go.

Conclusion

There may still be areas of your moral life that remain under sin's dominion, but the Holy Spirit is changing us daily to be more Christlike. And one day, His work in us will be complete. Romans 8:15 says, "For you did not receive the spirit of bondage again to fear, but you received the Spirit of adoption by whom we cry out, "Abba, Father." The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, then heirs—heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with *Him*, that we may also be glorified together." (Romans 8:15-17 NKJV)

We used to be like slaves to sin, but now we know what it is like to relate to him as our Father with joy and confidence. Now, with resurrection hope and an understanding of our eternal future, we can face the sufferings of this life with faith and confidence in Christ that something better is just ahead! And every true child of God receives this affirmation from the Spirit of God.

The Spirit of God provides a personal assurance to all of God's children of this resurrection hope that helps us overcome the sufferings of this life. Maybe you need to be adopted into God's family, so you can receive God's Spirit and experience his assurance. You don't earn this adoption—God *wants* to adopt you! - so much that he has already paid the price of his Son's death. All you have to do is accept Jesus and tell him to forgive you for your sinful life and give you a new life and eternal hope.